



**Members Present:** Paula Erickson, Jodi Gruhn (9:13 a.m.), Paul Herold, Michael Tautges, and Amy Yessa.

**Members Absent:** Al Chaney

**Staff & Guests:** John Cokl, Liberty Heidmann, Brian Kalish, Ginger Keymer, and Tim Roman (Guest).

## Minutes (approved)

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call** – Due to the absence of Chair and Vice Chair, and the presence of quorum, Kalish called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.
2. **Welcome to Amy Yessa, WATEA Executive Director** – Kalish welcomed Amy Yessa to the Executive Committee and Yessa introduced herself.
3. **Approval of Executive Minutes from October 9, 2025** – Herold made a motion to approve the Minutes from October 9, 2025; Tautges seconded. Motion carried.
4. **Investments Updates: Tim Roman** – Roman provided an overview of the Board's investments and strong performance and provided the Executive Committee with an opportunity to alter investment strategy or stay the course. Gruhn asked for John's opinion. Cokl stated continuation of the current growth strategy of 80/20 asset allocation (80% stocks/20% bonds) seemed sound and has been advantageous in the long run. Cokl reiterated Roman's reminder that investment changes could always be made at any time. Tautges brought up the Board's investment performance compared to the S&P 500 index. Roman highlighted that the S&P is a 100% stock allocation and really a marker of the magnificent 7: the seven largest and most influential tech stocks in the U.S. Roman felt the diversification of an 80/20 allocation was prudent and measured approach that still led to strong returns.
5. **Accept Treasurer's Report** – Erickson made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report; Yessa seconded. Motion carried.
6. **Update and Possible Action on Accepting Employee Handbook Revisions** – Cokl summarized the contents of the memo and the addition of two policies recommended by Spectrum Insurance and Mineral software program: (1) a Workplace Privacy and Right to Inspect Policy and (2) a Non-Solicitation and Non-Distribution Policy. Yessa inquired on staff's reaction to the new Handbook. Kalish, Cokl, and Keymer shared that staff was generally very positive with the updates and revisions, especially with the bi-weekly match to 401(K) versus

annual match and a new detailed outlined of a tiered dress code for staff. Only pushback or rumblings came from slight changes to mileage reimbursement policy, where staff would not be compensated for biweekly trips to the Stevens Point office for staff meetings. Tautges reiterated the need to specify clearly in the Handbook that Employer match of 401(K) would be capped at 5% of employee’s annual earnings. Tautges made a motion to approve the Employee Handbook with the addition of two new policies and statement of Employer cap on 401(K) matches; Herold seconded. Motion carried.

## 7. NCWWDB Updates

- **Awards of Excellence Recap** – The event was well attended and received by award winners and staff. Around fifty people attended. Brian thanked Jodi Gruhn for attending on behalf of the Board. Overall, moving to an evening event worked well. DWD monitoring staff indicated that grant funds could be used towards this type of award and recognition events.
- **Job Center Updates:** The Wisconsin Rapids lease will end December 31<sup>st</sup>. A press release announcing the closure will be issued later this week. Working with partners on the possibility of utilizing space at McMillan Library. Kalish is also working with Job Center partners on a new location for Marathon County Job Center. The former UW-Marathon County buildings were toured and remain a promising alternative. Kalish attended a Marathon County Board Executive Meeting to advocate for use of the space. The Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin also attended and reached out to Kalish to partner on an RFP to Marathon County for joint use of the space. Yessa mentioned the possibility of available space at the former Grant Elementary School. Kalish had heard of that location but was unsure on whether the presence of a HeadStart program would make the site unsuitable or allowable for Job Center population. Yessa offered to share information materials on the Grant Elementary location. Kalish gratefully acknowledged and stated he would definitely look into the site as a possibility.
- **Monitoring** – Currenting our monitoring by DWD is wrapping up and going well. We will receive an official write-up within 45 days.

8. **Adjourn** – Herold made a motion to adjourn at 10:11 a.m.; Erickson seconded. Motion carried.

**Next Exec Meeting** – Thursday, January 8, 2026

[Strategic Plan Scorecard](#)

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Approved by Exec Committee on 02/18/2026